

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16) today cosponsored legislation authored by Rep. Vern Buchanan (FL-13) to hold oil companies accountable for offshore spills, while improving federal oversight to prevent future spills.

“Congressman Buchanan has set forward a strong plan to improve oversight, hold oil companies accountable, and help ensure that tragedies like the Gulf oil spill never happen again,” Rooney said. “For too long, federal regulators put the public safety at risk by allowing BP to miss inspections and cut corners. This bill strengthens oversight and eliminates conflicts of interest to prevent future environmental disasters.

“By eliminating the cap on financial liability for oil companies responsible for spills, this bill requires companies like BP to pay the full cost of offshore oil spills. Taxpayers should not pay one dime of the costs associated with the Deep Horizon spill. BP must bear the full costs of stopping the leak, cleaning up the spill and compensating the victims.”

The “Oil Spill Prevention Act,” H.R. 5572, would:

- 1) Prevent conflicts of interest at the Minerals Management Service (MMS) by separating the office responsible for safety and environmental protection from the leasing office, which collects revenues;
- 2) Require random drug testing of MMS employees;
- 3) Close the revolving door between MMS and oil companies by requiring employees to wait at least two years before working for an oil company;
- 4) Strengthen oversight by mandating that missed inspections be rescheduled and eliminating categorical exemptions from environmental requirements; and,
- 5) Eliminate the cap on the financial liability of oil companies responsible for offshore spills.

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